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[p. 126]

136 to the fauna is equally unsatisfactory. Despite
the extensive forests, wild life is scarce. No
136 one in Cherán gets a living from hunting, and
224 the amount of game taken forms an inconsiderable amount of the food supply. Deer and peccary are sometimes hunted and occasionally damage outlying fields, but they do not seem to be numerous. Squirrels, rabbits, wild pigeons, and quail are among the animals of most economic importance. Badgers are known, but are not eaten. An exception to the general scarcity of wild life is the coyote. This animal appears to be numerous and to be a danger to livestock in the outskirts of the town. Larger predatory animals, such as the jaguar and the mountain lion, are unknown. Informants could recall only one mountain lion being seen or killed in the vicinity of the town. The region is, of course, too high for the absence of the jaguar to be surprising, but smaller members of the genus *Felis* are also rare. Only the wildcat is reported. The rattlesnake and *culebrilla* occur, but are not common. As there are few handicrafts practiced in Cherán, the community is consequently primarily agricul-
[311] tural and the only use of the forests is for lumbering, charcoal making, and grazing.

Little need be said about the people of Cherán
142 or their language. Although white admixture certainly exists in the town's population, there
[146] are virtually no acknowledged Mestizos. Until studies of the Tarascan population are completed, it perhaps will suffice to say that the people of Cherán seem to be typical Tarascans, on the average relatively short and slender, although stocky individuals are not uncommon. Their complexion is relatively dark, the hair is straight, and the features are attractive. Cor-
164 pulence in old age is very rare. Goiter or
147 incipient goiter is common, especially in the mountain towns, although the disease is less frequent in Cherán than in many other settlements. Teeth are bad, a condition observed for the area in pre-Columbian remains also. Not only are caries frequent, but malocclusion is common. Individuals with attractive regular teeth are the exception. (Pls. 1, upper and lower right; 2; 3, center and lower right and left.)

197 The language of Cherán is Tarascan, a tongue which shows relatively few dialectic differences.

negligible. Turpentine is produced at any season of the year. The first cut in trees is made about 20 or 25 cm. (8 or 10 in.) from the ground, with a small ax called gúrbia. The initial cut is one-half cm. vertically and 10 cm. horizontally. At the base of the cut a small copper or pottery cup is fastened. The initial cut is lengthened upward each year until, after about 10 years, the cut is 1.50 to 1.70 m. in height. A cut is then started on the opposite side of the tree. Formerly it was the practice to leave the cup for collecting the resin at the bottom of the cut. This wasted considerable resin, and now the cup is raised as the height of the cut is increased. In order to lead the resin into the cup, a small sheet of metal is driven into the tree just above the cup. The cup is emptied every 8 days and the cut cleaned or enlarged.

The collected resin or *brea* is cooked in special stills. An *olla* of resin is placed above a fire-box (fig. 2). The cover and "coil" are made of pottery (in the village of Patamban), and the turpentine is caught in another vessel. Before the decline in turpentine prices caused by World War II, a kilo of resin sold at 8 centavos in the woods and a 5-gallon tin of turpentine sold at 18 pesos. In 1941, prices were 4 or 5 centavos for a kilo of resin with a corresponding drop in turpentine prices.

HUNTING

Probably no one in Cherán derives any considerable part of his livelihood from hunting. Some men hunt casually because their farms or lumbering activities take them where game is more plentiful. Others hunt a good deal because they enjoy it. Finally, sometimes people hunt because they are poor and thus can augment their food supply or income.

The most commonly hunted animals are deer, pecary (guákin), squirrels (both ordinary, kuníke, and flying squirrels), rabbits, quail, pigeons, and less commonly, armadillos. Other local wild animals are not eaten. Heavy rifles are used for large animals, usually .30 or .32 caliber, and .22 caliber rifles for squirrels.

Deer are sometimes trapped in pits in the mountains. Squirrels are caught in snares. Horsehair threads are used to make snares to catch quail and pigeons. Quail snares are hung

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231 the plow. Care and practices otherwise are the same as for horses.

231 492 *Burros.*—"The poor man's mule" is one of the more common animals in Cherán. Often kept in a shed by the house, the burro is employed to bring in firewood (when he may be ridden to the woods), to bring in the harvest, carry goods on trading trips, and perform any other service of burden carrying. Burros may be used as light draft animals in such tasks as dragging brush over wheat fields to cover the seed after sowing. Often rented, especially at harvest time, burros are frequently lent to friends, neighbors, and relatives. Although hard-worked, they are usually better cared for and less abused than among the Mestizos. They are often fed rather than pastured, and saddle sores and other signs of abuse are relatively uncommon.

[262] [281] Burros are bred in the town. Jacks are not castrated. The flesh is never eaten and the hide is regarded as of little value.

231 *Dogs.*—Usually each household has one or perhaps two dogs, but large numbers of starved animals are rare. Ordinarily a dog is fed what the family has, and if a dog is underfed, usually the family is also. Dogs are always named, usually for "pretty things or animals" [551] such as Butterfly, Duke, Tiger, or Rattlesnake. Others are named for their coat color or because the name is liked. No effort is made to control the breeding of dogs.

Dogs are used in hunting, sheepherding, and to guard the house. In the latter capacity, the dogs of the *barrio* of Parícutin are much more aggressive than in the rest of the town. This may be because their masters are generally less friendly or may simply reflect the more rural character of the *barrio*.

[224] Hunting dogs are used to chase deer, squirrels, rabbits, and other animals after they have been wounded. Apparently no special training is given. Sheep dogs are trained by putting them on a leash with a sheep during the day and tying them near the sheep at night. They are encouraged to bark at the right time and to attack coyotes.

Cats.—Cats are not numerous in Cherán, although they are valued fairly highly because they combat the many rats which steal stored corn. Cats seem well treated and are some-

443 Sunday. The places where meat is sold are
253 called "*despachos*" and are announced by hang-
262 ing out a red flag on a standard. Four or five places sell meat remaining from Sunday through most of the week. No distinction is made in price between meat with bone and meat without bone, but on request one will be served only meat; in the Tarascan towns the buyer has to take what is cut. Pork is preferred to beef. Beef hides are sold to dealers; those of swine either are made into cracklings or are pickled in vinegar after rubbing with chile, onion, garlic, and fragrant herbs.

226 Some fish are caught with nets in the river
262 passing Chilchota. The fishermen are only semiprofessional, fishing when they have time and selling the catch only if they have more than can be consumed at home. At least one
● 224 man, a farmer, hunts deer in his spare time.
262 He sells the flesh retail like beef. The dried
237 deer blood, hoofs, and hair are sold for magical or medicinal uses.

Black maize is used primarily to make
252 *chapatas*, tamales of black or red maize, sweet-
262 ened with brown sugar and mixed with black or red amaranth. It is also used to make *atole de cascara de cacao* (atole of chocolate hulls) and *ponteduros*, which are toasted immature corn ground and mixed with brown sugar sirup.

Greens (*quelites*) of wheat are made from
423 a wild plant or weed which grows among the
252 wheat and are greatly liked in Chilchota. A
262 curious custom exists in that anyone may help himself to these greens, entering into wheat fields belonging to others either with or without permission. Anyone objecting would be severely censored in Chilchota. Pozole is also made from green wheat toasted, ground, and mixed with chile, salt, and "*epazote*." The time for this is May at the harvest; it is "hot" food.

A food made from the chayote root is *sagú*.
252 The skin is removed from the tubers and the
262 pulp ground to a sort of flour. The flour is placed in water for 2 or 3 days, being stirred frequently. The flour is then allowed to settle, the water drained off, and the flour dried. Although it is used in various dishes, the main
[846] use is to feed small children and women recently delivered, when it is cooked in water, either plain or sweetened with honey. The plain boiled chayote root, uarás in Tarascan, is sold

423 hectares in size,[48] and may be used indefinitely by the recipient, provided they are not left untilled for more than two successive years. They may [428] be inherited by sons, daughters, or in-laws, and may be divided among them. A family head may sell the use rights of his land to another member of the community, but not to outsiders. The official title to lands is held by the pueblo.

Another remnant of communal holdings, common in all parts of Tarasca, is found in the woodland, which is considered common land.[49]

[804] [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 33b]

[48] In most parts of Tarasca land is measured in terms of the quantity of grain used in planting. Thus, in La Cañada a plot of maize land may vary from 1 to 8 liters of maize in size. Approximately 2 liters of maize is necessary to plant 1 hectare. (The term "hectare," however, is unknown to most Tarascans.) Five liters of maize equal 1 *medida*; 100 liters of maize are equivalent to 1 *fanega* (one hundredweight), or one *yunta*, meaning the amount of land in which a team (*yunta*) of oxen can plant one *fanega* of maize in one season. In terms of wheat, 44 liters equal 1 *carga*, or from 1 to 1½ *yuntas*. The above equivalents are those used in Chilchota and Carapan. Similar land measurements are employed in the Sierra.

[49] This aboriginal custom parallels the ancient Spanish practice of reserving woodland as communal property.

TARASCAN ECONOMY

241 Tarascan economy is today, and was in pre-Conquest times, as diversified as that of any large Indian group in North America. Agriculture has always been the preeminent occupation of most of the Tarascan population. Formerly, a 226 significant part of the people were fishers (or farmers and fishers), living around the shores of Lakes Pátzcuaro and Zirahuén and the numerous lakes and marshes of the northern plateau; the modern fishers are limited chiefly to the islands 224 within Lake Pátzcuaro. Moreover, hunting and 222 gathering, although now of small importance, is 463 still practiced throughout the area. Apart from the food quest, two other occupations have characterized Tarascan economy since prehistoric days: handicrafts and trade. Many of the Tarascan [438] villages specialize in particular home industries, for which they are famed over a large area. Again, in prehistoric and modern times the Tarascan has been one of the more notable Indian traders, serving as commercial middleman between the *tierra fría* and *tierra caliente* to the south and west.

AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND ASSOCIATED CROP TYPES

241 Tarascan agriculture involves a mixture of New and Old World plants and cultivation practices. 177 The native trilogy—maize, beans, and squash—

[TEXT CONTINUES bottom P. 33b]

222 mestizo towns nearby for the manufacture of scrubbing brushes. This activity is not peculiar to Tarascans, for it is carried on by both mestizos and Indians in high altitudes of the Mesa Central where the grass grows in abundance.

263 Before the eruption of Parícutin in 1943, honey
222 gathering was an important collecting activity in the Sierra. The heavy fall of volcanic ash killed or drove away all wild bees in the area, terminating the ancient trade of the *panaleros*, or honey gatherers. Formerly there were 15 *panaleros* in Urapicho, and several in Cherán and Tanaco. In the spring of 1946 it was rumored in some pueblos farthest from the volcano that a few swarms of bees were returning. (See Beals, 1946, pp. 13–14, for a description of honey collecting in the Sierra.)

HUNTING ACTIVITIES

● 224 In pre-Conquest times hunting formed a significant part of the food quest among the Tarascans. Deer, rabbit, and grouse were hunted in the Sierra, while migratory waterfowl, chiefly ducks, were taken in the Lake area (Relación de Michoacán, p. 15). Today only duck hunting on Lake Pátzcuaro still has economic importance, and there it is limited chiefly to fishers—the islanders and some *rancheros* on the Tarıu-k'eri Peninsula. Nine varieties of migratory ducks (principally of the genera *Nyroca*, *Mareca*, and *Nettion*) are recognized by the fishermen. Customarily bird hunting starts on the Día de los Muertos fiestas (October 31 and November 1), when as many as 100 ducks are killed by a single hunter, and continues until the departure of the flocks in late March. The p'atámu, or spear propelled with the
411 throwing stick (*ɬapáki*, or the Nahuatl *atlatl*), is still employed by many duck hunters. The spear, with a *carrizo* handle 3 m. long, carries 3 points, called the *fisga* (k'enčéta), each 7 cm. in length (fig. 5). Old flintlocks (*carabinas de chispas*) are also used by the Urandén islanders, but many modern hunters from Janitzio possess modern shotguns. Ducks are eaten in the Lake pueblos and many are sold in Pátzcuaro. Waterfowl are hunted by Tarascans likewise in the Zacapu Basin.

224 In the Sierra, hunting is looked upon as a
[517] pastime by most modern Indians. Men and boys often hunt deer, squirrels, and rabbits with flintlocks and some modern rifles. Game, however, is largely depleted in the Sierra. Beals

[Text continues bottom of P. 52b--Analyst]

4: West K-5 (1946) 1948 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[P. 525b] Pátzcuaro

224 (1946, p. 19) mentions the use of pit traps and snares in Cherán.

FISHING

226 A large part of pre-Conquest Tarasca was inhabited by fishers, most of whom were part-time farmers.[118] There were two important fishing areas: (1) the northern plateau region, dotted with lakes and marshes, and (2) the central lakes, Pátzcuaro and Zirahuén. Fishing was also practiced in the shallow lagoons in the Cotija graben west of the Sierra and in the Tepalcatepec and Balsas Rivers in the *tierra caliente*. In the above-named areas fishing continued unchanged throughout most of the colonial period, but during the last 150 years it has declined mainly in the northern and western sections, owing to desiccation and draining of marshes.[119] In Lake Pátzcuaro, fishing has been declining since the mid-18th century. By 1789 all the inhabitants of the south-shore pueblos had ceased to fish (AGN Historia, vol. 73, ff. 292–302v), and today Lake Pátzcuaro fishers are limited mainly to the islands and a few small *ranchos* on the Tarío-k'éri Peninsula. Only ves-

[118] The Nahuatl name for the Tarascan area (particularly the section around the central lakes) was Mechoacán, meaning the land of the fishers.

[119] The desiccated areas where fishing was once significant included the basins of Zacapu, the Tarimbaro lowland north of Morelia, the Tangamcuaro Basin, the lowlands southeast of Lake Chapala, and the chain of lakes (Guadalupe, San Juanico, Magdalena, Tacámbaro) in the Cotija graben. Some fishing is still practiced by mestizos in Lakes Turicio and Cuitzeo, although the waters of both are constantly receding, and the latter occasionally dries up completely. The western portion of Lake Chapala, formerly Tarascan territory, is still fished. There are some nine mestizo fishermen at Zirahuén, and carpa are still caught in the *tierra caliente* streams. This fish is dried and carried to the Sierra towns for consumption on fast days.